

SPKIE

Conestoga College, Kitchener

JULY 24, 2000

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CSI seeking more power

Student government wants to be recognized in legislation

By Petra Lampert

Conestoga Students Inc., formerly the Doon Student Association, wants to be recognized in legislation and is requesting increased governing power.

Philip LeBeau, president of the CSI, said the group is in the process of submitting letters and a charter in response to the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario (ACAATO's) charter.

The CSI is a member of the Ontario Community College Student Parliamentary Association (OCCSPA) which represents full-time students in Ontario. LeBeau said there's nothing on paper that states that there has to be a student government at colleges.

He said OCCSPA wants student government rights legislated. "We're creating awareness for student legislation."

OCCSPA is requesting that the following be included in the legislation.

- A student government at each college to provide for the administration of the affairs for students, including the development and management of student institutions.

- Student government be the official medium of communication between the students of a public college and the college community,

which includes the board of governors.

- College administration and student government work together to ensure that there is a student representative on every college committee that makes decisions or recommendations that will affect any student attending college.

LeBeau said he plans to meet with local MPPs on July 25 to discuss the legislation.

In June 1999, ACAATO released a charter for Ontario colleges entitled Discussion of Key Roles and

Priorities, and OCCSPA responded in January 2000.

In May 2000, ACAATO released its second formal paper, entitled Ontario's Colleges for the 21st Century.

Some main topics in the paper included access, funding, accountability, board authority, institutional flexibility and credentials.

LeBeau said none of OCCSPA's recommendations surrounding student government were included in the legislation.

He said ACAATO's document did mention that more student board of governor members were needed.

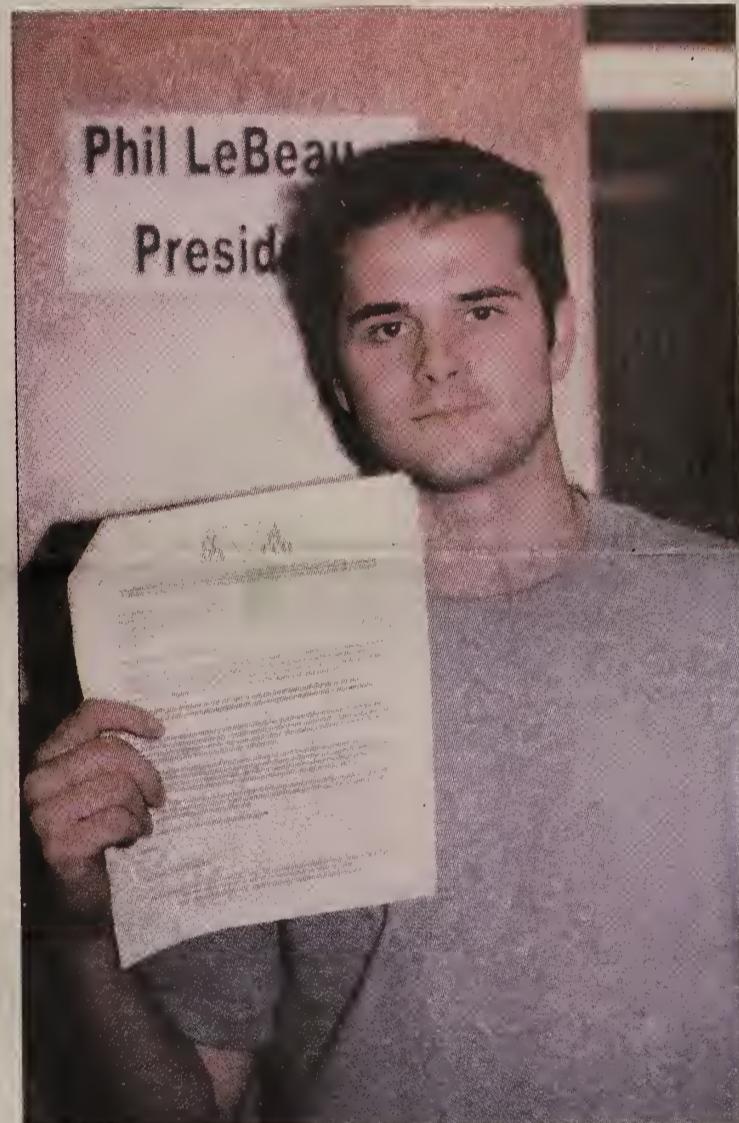
LeBeau said the CSI represents students and is their voice to the college.

"We're here for representation," he said. "We make sure you get what you pay for."

ACAATO consists of all the presidents of Ontario colleges.

"We're here for your representation. We make sure you get what you pay for."

*Phil LeBeau,
president of the CSI*



Phil LeBeau, president of the CSI, holds a letter from OCCSPA sent to Dianne Cunningham, minister of training, colleges and universities, regarding student government legislation.

(Photo by Petra Lampert)

Barbecue and car wash offered as thanks

By Julie Porter

Burgers were char-broiled and cars were given a sparkly new clean for free on July 14 in the parking lot of the Canadian Tire store in Waterloo, in an attempt by the Kitchener-Waterloo Career Connections (KWCC) to thank the community for its support.

Staff from the KWCC were on hand to suds off summer grime from cars and feed all in attendance a hearty burger.

"A free end of the week car wash and barbecue is something we thought everyone would really appreciate," said student employment officer Jerrid Tremaine.

Tremaine said that in between

"A free end-of-the-week car wash and barbecue is something we thought everyone would appreciate."

*Jerrid Tremaine,
student employment officer*

rain showers, the group was able to wash about 25 cars and feed several people burgers, adding that families driving by would stop in for some food.

The KWCC is a human resource centre for students which works in

part with Human Resources Development Canada, Lutherwood-CODA, Conestoga College and the Waterloo Region District School Board.

The centre helps students find jobs year round.

According to Karen Brent, lead student employment officer, 2,500 students a year use the job bank. Most of them are between the ages of 15 and 24.

"We help students find jobs and we offer free postings for employers," said Brent. A similar job-posting program was in existence prior to the KWCC but was under a different name and did not have a provincial and federal government partnership.

Brent said that many high school students use the summer job boards and that Conestoga College students come in droves around May and June seeking work for the summer.

Brent said typical job postings include retail sales, kitchen help and jobs posted by non-profit organizations, which usually have to be filled quickly and are snatched up quickly.

Brent said the service that KWCC provides is important and necessary as it allows employers to post jobs for free, and it finds jobs for young people who otherwise might not be able to find decent-paying work that they need to make some money.

Protect our doctors from pro-life fanatics

It seems that there will never be an end to the abortion debate.

We will live with the picket lines, the anger on both sides. We will exist amidst the controversy, the unsettled.

Something we should not have to live with, regardless of the politics, regardless of the anger, is bullets and knives stuck deep into the flesh of our country's doctors.

On July 11, Dr. Gary Romalis, a Vancouver gynecologist, was stabbed in the back with what was described as a long, large knife. It was the second violent attack on Romalis's life — the first came in November 1994, when a sniper's bullet came through his kitchen window and almost killed him.

We fought to keep the death penalty out of our judicial system. We must also fight to keep it out of our medical system.

According to an article written by Romalis for the *Globe and Mail*, he has had to equip his purposely non-descript car with a remote starter he activates at a distance, in case it has been wired with a bomb. His car has shatter-resistant windows and Kevlar door panels. He never gets out of the car on the street, and uses a remote control for his garage door.

His house has bulletproof windows and the patio where his family holds barbecues has a fence that prevents a sniper from getting a clear shot. His curtains are opaque and the doors are always locked. He has a special alarm system in his home and office, and video cameras are continually monitored.

Romalis always wears a bulletproof vest on his way to work.

And all because someone thinks that it is OK to kill someone who they think "kills the unborn."

For a long time, society has struggled with the idea of using murder as punishment for murder. Capital punishment, which thankfully has been abolished in Canada, uses this very principle.

In the United States, many states with deeply religious voters believe in the whole "eye for an eye" way of thinking.

In Texas, for example, families of the criminal's victims are allowed to view the execution through the safety of thick glass. It is the antithesis of rehabilitation. It is murder for murder.

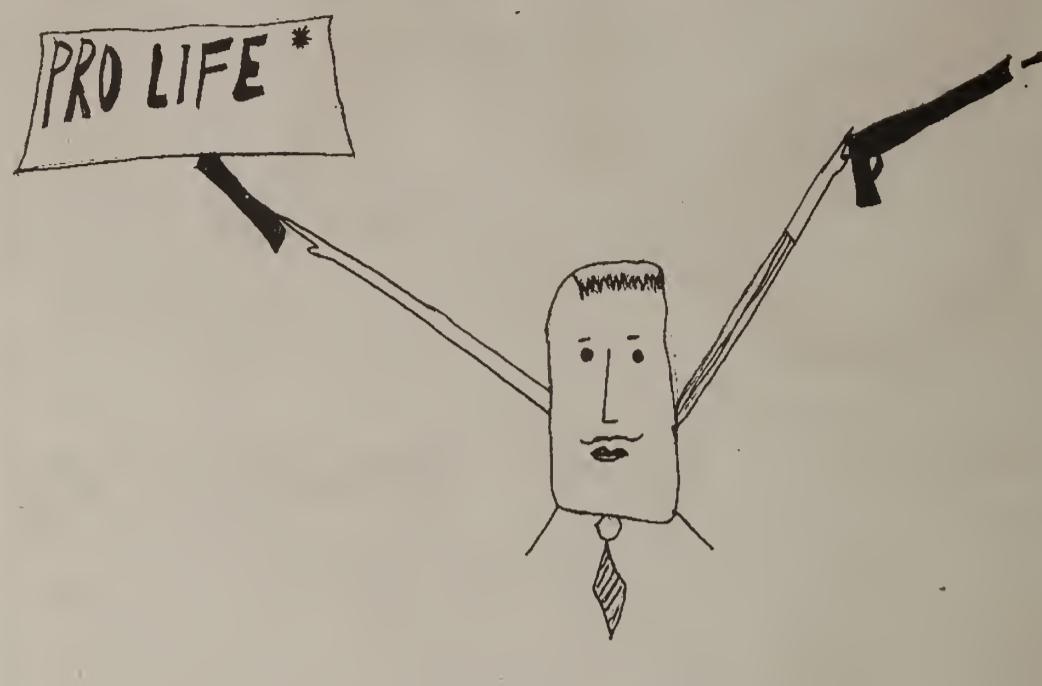
So is it entirely surprising that the militant and obviously deranged use this same model, eye for an eye, to exterminate abortion doctors?

No.

But what is surprising is although many Canadians support a woman's right to choose, too few are willing to stand up to snipers' bullets and the threat of a large knife piercing their lungs and heart to denounce and express outrage against these senseless acts of violence against our country's doctors. Even those who are pro-life cannot justify killing doctors.

We fought to keep the death penalty out of our judicial system. We must also fight to keep it out of our medical system.

We have to keep this killing of physicians separate from the emotions and politics of the abortion debate and see it for what it is — senseless.



* We'll decide whose life . . .
After all, how many of
Canada's doctors are
unborn?

J.P.

Leave spanking in the hands of the parents, not teachers



Tracy
Ford

Canada's Supreme Court ruling on the spanking law which would continue to allow teachers and parents to physically discipline children is discouraging.

The law, which has been a part of the criminal code since 1892, was recently challenged by the Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and Law, which argued the law violates a child's right to equality and security and sanctions the use of cruel and unusual punishment.

Judge David McCombs said even mild forms of corporal punishment do no good and in some cases may cause harm, and Cheryl Milne, one of the lawyers who brought the challenge on behalf of the foundation, said it leaves children vulnerable.

McCombs said more definite lines must be drawn between corporal punishment and abuse.

Teachers have no right to strike a child because they are only in the

child's life for a third of their day. Parents have a better knowledge of what types of punishment will work for their children. Teachers come and go in a child's life, from year to year and semester to semester in older grades. Why should such an important decision be in the hands of someone with a transient existence in the child's life?

Not only does physical punishment hurt and humiliate the child, it also leaves a lasting scar. A child will only remember the pain of the punishment and not the reason for it. A better form of punishment can be found for disciplining children.

Excessive force used with the false pretense of discipline shows a lack of patience, control and understanding from the parent or teacher.

The lines aren't always clear between corporal punishment and abuse. Abuse doesn't just leave physical scars, but emotional ones. It is impossible to measure the amount of force used by a parent or teacher that would cause permanent emotional damage; a child should be taken from an abusive family not only for physical evidence but also evidence of emotional scarring.

Children who have been physically abused can show lack of self-esteem as well as disrespect for authority. As well, abused children often feel betrayed and abandoned.

And growing up in a house where children are spanked for discipline can leave a child confused. Such children begin to ask why their parents say they love them and then hurt them. Sometimes corporal punishment will work to some degree. It humiliates the child enough so he or she will not commit the disobedience again, but that child will not want to experiment, explore or try new things for fear of being wrong and getting punished.

Raising a child requires patience, guidance and respect from adults and children. Children will follow the parents' lead and imitate adults. Children who see hitting as a form of love will grow up hitting the ones they love.

Corporal punishment has no good outcomes. Perhaps parents feel physical discipline is necessary, but teachers have no right laying their hands on a child. The oldest law in the country is out of date and should be refreshed to exclude the allowances it gives teachers.

SPOKE Keeping Conestoga College connected

SPOKE is published and produced weekly by the journalism students of Conestoga College.

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Persistence key to freelance writing

Guest speaker gives tips for success to journalism students

By Jes Brown

When he was in Grade 12, Paul Gains's English teacher would make him stand up in front of the class and read out his writing, in what seemed like an intent to embarrass him.

"She was so impressed with my writing ability that she gave me 52 out of 100 that year," he says.

Gains, who is now a successful freelance journalist, came to Conestoga's Doon campus to speak to journalism students on July 10.

Gains spoke about the skills needed to be a freelance journalist, including persistence and a thick skin. He also talked about freelancing stories from his travels in Japan, Korea, North Africa, Libya, England and the United States.

In the seven years since he quit his job in the event-marketing business, he has been published in various newspapers and magazines,

including the New York Times, Maclean's, Equinox, the National Post, the Globe and Mail and the British edition of GQ.

He said he began freelance writing because he wanted to find a job that he could do for the rest of his life, a job that he'd never have to retire from.

"It's a lifestyle more than a job," said Gains, stating that he can decide when he wants to work, who he works for and where he goes for his stories.

A typical day for Gains includes waking up early and packing his three young children off to summer camp or school before checking



Freelance journalist Paul Gains successfully markets stories to a host of publications. (Photo by Jes Brown)

his e-mail. Gains often does interviews and editing in the mornings while his two oldest children are

Gains says he enjoys working at home because he gets to spend more time with his children,

away. He says he does the bulk of his writing after his children have gone to bed.

Gains has a quota system to keep him on track and earning enough money to support his family but says that usually he writes less than 20 hours a week.

Gains also conducts writing workshops.

He held one in June and will hold one in September. There are usually nine or 10 participants for the full-day workshop, which costs \$60 and includes lunch.

Conor, 7, Olivia, 4, and Owen, four months, and his wife, Denise, who also works at their home in Cambridge.

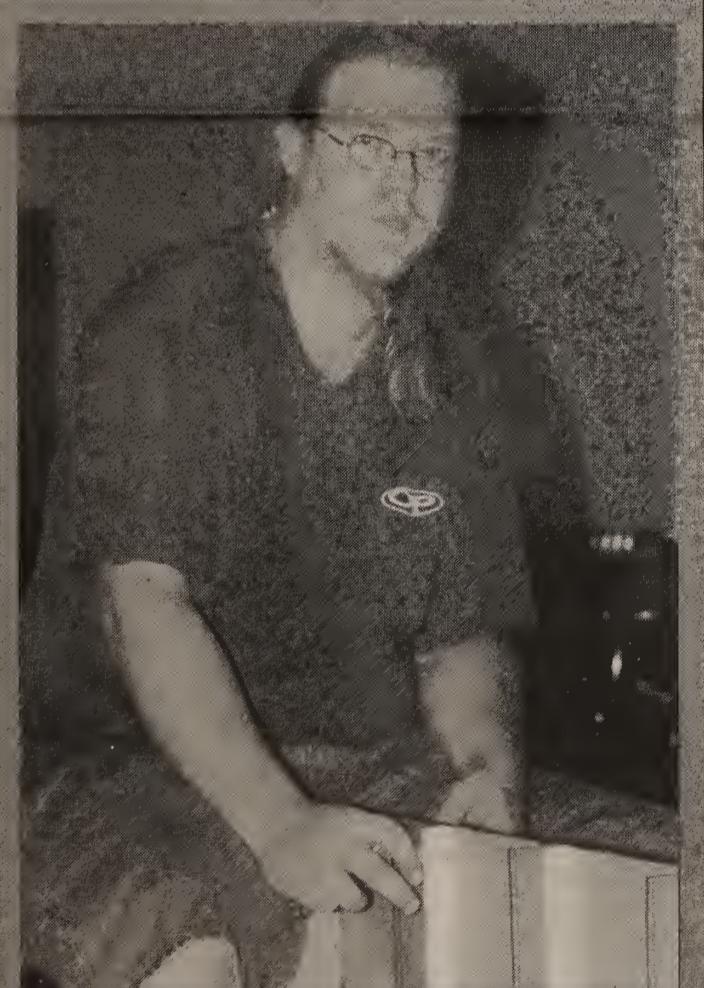
During his career as a freelance writer, Gains has interviewed celebrities such as musician Eric Clapton, actor Kevin Spacey, race-car driver Jacques Villeneuve, author Deepak Chopra, boxers Evander Holyfield and Lennox Lewis and Peter Garrett from the musical group Midnight Oil.

Gains says that freelance writing can be a viable career for someone with the persistence to make it work. He says that if someone turns down one of his ideas he pitches it to someone else.

His advice is to never turn down a job, constantly look for ideas, read every day and write down your goals.

"If I can make a living from this," said Gains, "anyone can. It's not rocket science."

3rd-year project



Robotics and Automation student Ryan Myers works on his 3rd-year project in the woodworking building on July 17. (Photo by Jes Brown)

Middle income families have trouble getting money from OSAP

By Tracy Ford

Canada's universities and colleges are becoming more inaccessible to students from middle to low income families, according to a study released by the University of Alberta.

The university's findings coincide with a study done by the Federation of Students at the University of Waterloo.

The study concluded that higher tuition fees have discouraged students from lower income families from applying to post-secondary institutions. It said that although student assistance is available, students are discouraged by the possibility of higher debt.

The study found that for every 100 students from lower income areas who attended university in 1991, the number dropped to 93. One student per hundred each year was unable to attend post-secondary education due to financial incapability.

Carol Walsh, administrator of financial aid and student scholarship and awards, said enrollment at Conestoga College is up and the financial aid office expects an increase in OSAP applications.

"Students from lower income families will get OSAP," said Walsh, "but of course they will

have a debt."

She said anyone from middle to high-income families will be expected to get funding from parents or their spouses. The system is compliant with the Family Law Act, which states parents or spouses are expected to contribute toward the cost of their child's or spouse's post-secondary education. Walsh said the size of contribution expected by the financial aid office is determined by the income of the family.

"If you are living away from home and attending school you can expect to spend \$10,000 a year on educational costs."

*Carol Walsh,
administrator of
financial aid*

"If you are living away from home and attending school, you can expect to spend \$10,000 a year on educational costs," she said. "Middle income families fall through the cracks."

Last year the federal government introduced Millennium scholar-

ships, a monetary award given to OSAP recipients with a considerable debt. The money would be given directly to the bank in which the student took the student loan to decrease their indebtedness. Walsh said students were upset that the federal government was assisting the provincial government and the scholarship's design was not benefiting students.

Since then, the federal government has lowered its loan forgiveness program to \$6,000 from \$7,000, meaning for each year an OSAP loan is taken out, the student is only responsible to repay \$6,000.

"They were trying to appease the students," said Walsh, "The issue has always been high debt."

Walsh said college tuition is considerably lower than university tuition, yet the education received is of the same calibre of a university.

"You're investing in your future. Our grads have good futures," she said.

There are certain guidelines to be met before a student can receive financial aid.

"A student with a car worth \$10,000, they aren't going to get OSAP," she said.

"Some (families) are prepared for university and college tuition and some families aren't," Walsh said.

**Climb Higher
Read Spoke**

Day-care centre filling up fast

Limited spaces available for fall - waiting list for infants and toddlers

By Petra Lampert

The college's day-care centre spaces are filling up fast for the fall.

Currently there is a waiting list for infants and toddlers. However, there is still some space available for preschool, junior and senior kindergarten, and school age children.

"At this point, most of the child-care centre is full for the fall," said Shelley Schenk, early childhood education manager for the college's child-care centres.

She said there's a high demand for infant and toddler care and fewer spots are available for them because of the small day-care worker-to-child ratio.

Schenk said the ratios are set by the Day Nursery Act that governs all the child-care centres in Ontario.

The staff to child ratio varies with the child's age.

For example, the ratio in the infant care program (children up to 18 months) is one worker for three children and for school age children (including children up to age 10) the ratio is one to 15.

The day-care centre has a licensed capacity for 82 children. However, the number of children in the centre varies.

"We have 10 full-time employees and a variety of ongoing part-time employees," said Schenk.

Conestoga's day-care centre is open to anyone in the community, including the college community.

Schenk said that the college's staff, faculty and students are not the only ones to take advantage of the centre's services.

"We have families coming in from surrounding communities such as Ayr, Plattsburg, Cambridge and Guelph," said Schenk, "in addition to those from the Kitchener-Waterloo Region."

She said children are taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

"Certainly we try to accommodate students' children in the program," said Schenk.

She said that anyone who would like their children in the day-care centre should contact the centre by calling 748-5229, or stopping in to inquire, whether it be for now or for the future.

"We recommend to students that when they apply for a program to put the child's name on the waiting list for child care," said Schenk. "Then if they get accepted to their program they'll have a spot, especially for infants and toddlers."

She said parents usually contact the day-care centre throughout the school year and the majority of the spaces are confirmed during the summer for the fall.

"We invite families in August to meet the staff and have a more detailed tour of our centre," said Schenk.

"Although we're an on-campus location, we don't have a complete turnover of children in the fall," said Schenk. "New children are coming in throughout the year."

Parents and students who lack funds and need to use the day-care service may qualify for financial assistance.

Schenk said some parents may be eligible to receive assistance with their monthly child care fees



Shelley Schenk, manager of the college's child-care centres, stands in front of the Early Childhood Education sign at the Doon campus.

(Photo by Petra Lampert)

through the child care division of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo. They may be entitled to partial or full subsidies.

"We, in turn, would be paid by the region, instead of the parents," said Schenk.

She also said a student can apply for additional funding through OSAP in order to offset child care fees.

The day-care centre offers a wide variety of activities for children. Depending on the child's age, there are activities involving small groups, music, science and art, like painting and clay moulding.

"The program provides the opportunity for children to socialize with peers and choose the type of activity, provided in the rooms, they want to partake in," said

Schenk.

She said there are a lot of outside activities for school-age children in the day-care centre full-time during the summer.

"We try to plan special activities every week during the summer," said Schenk. "We take field trips on campus and off campus."

During the first week of July the children visited the water park at Waterloo Park. On July 20, they were to tour the Wings of Paradise butterfly sanctuary outside of Cambridge.

Each day the centre provides a morning snack, home cooked lunch and an afternoon snack for the children. A menu is posted so parents can see what type of food is offered.

In addition to the staff, children

are supervised by students in the college's early childhood education program who do their field placements at the centre. Students in a typical week during the school year help two days per week.

"During the summer, we have full-time students who choose to do their placement in a more flexible way, rather than during the school year," said Schenk, "and some continuing education students."

Child care fees are due on the first of each month. The rates for September are: infant, \$825; toddler, \$700; preschool, \$575; junior/senior kindergarten, \$425; school age during morning, lunch, \$110; and school age (afternoon) \$140.

Hours of operation are 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

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Conestoga College

**Get a jolt,
Read Spoke.**

Upgrading

Jim Bruun, of computer services, completes computer upgrades in room 2A304 on July 17.

(Photo by Tracy Ford)

Literacy Lab helps students learn

Variety of state-of-the-art technology available at Doon campus

By Jes Brown

A wrist-watch that vibrates to keep you on track, computers that read to you or help you brainstorm, and a portable note-taking device you can carry to class.

These are some of the tools available in the Doon Campus Literacy Lab, which helps students cope with problems which might otherwise prevent them from completing their assignments or courses.

Computer technology consultant Su Lytle said people who use the lab include special needs students, people with peer tutors and health services students.

Student services usually refer people to the Literacy Lab. Learning disabilities students usually come to the lab through the special needs department.

"It's a quieter place to work," Lytle said.

The lab is a considered a commu-

nity resource and is open to members of the community outside the college as well.

When a user enters the lab for the first time, a peer tutor or adaptive technology specialist will conduct an orientation, to explain all the adaptive technology.

This technology includes, for example, the WatchMinder, a silent vibrator alarm system in a wrist-watch for students with attention deficits designed to keep the student on track during long classes. It emits a 2.5-second vibration to get the wearer's attention at random intervals.

Another piece of equipment is the AlphaSmart, a portable keyboard note-taking device for students who can't write notes in class for various reasons. Also available is the Reading Pen, a scanning and reading dictionary; the Parrot Organizer, a voice recognition organizer; and the Language

Master, a portable device to improve word recognition, pronunciation and grammar.

Also explained in the orientation are the computer programs that are available in the lab, such as Inspiration, a brainstorming tool designed for people who prefer to think in pictures rather than words.

There are several text-to-speech software programs, such as TextHelp, Aurora and WillowTalk. Text-to-speech software reads what is typed on screen back to the user.

"We have some very state-of-the-art facilities."

*Su Lytle,
computer consultant*

Dragon Dictate and Dragon NaturallySpeaking are speech recognition programs that allow virtually any application on the computer to be controlled without using the keyboard, which is useful for students with carpal tunnel syndrome or tendinitis, or vision impaired students.

Another piece of software is Kurzweil, which provides both an auditory and visual presentation of scanned text and images. It has a dictionary and thesaurus and word prediction capability.

The lab staff will also give advice on what software and hardware should be bought for personal use. Lytle and the others in the lab don't sell computers, but she said that they do tell people where they can get the proper technology.

Lytle said that the lab is a won-



Su Lytle shows off some of the equipment in the Literacy Lab, room 2A113.

(Photo by Jes Brown)

derful resource for students in the college and those outside the college as well.

Lytle said that a lot of people come to visit the Literacy Lab, including library staff from Wilfrid Laurier University who took a tour of the facilities July 18.

"We have some very state-of-the-art facilities," Lytle said. The lab has been in existence since 1996 and people in the community and

area are interested in it, she said. "What we try to do is show off our hardware and software," Lytle said. The lab is open during the summer every weekday except Thursday from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. and is open Thursday 10 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. for people in the community who can't make it to the college during the day.

Lytle said the lab is a place to help people on their way.

Jeremy Birch, CPA graduate, works in the Literacy Lab teaching people how to use the adaptive technology. (Photo by Jes Brown)

Rack stack



Carol Dawson, from alumni services, fills the magazine racks with the latest edition of Connections, the magazine created by alumni services. (Photo by Tracy Ford)

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Conestoga
College 

Entertainment

Trinket begins career with fresh CD

By Tracy Ford

Trinket, a new band on the scene with a fresh look and interesting sound, explodes into the music industry with its first CD, Set to Explode.

The extensive and well-formed offerings on this CD set the stage for a beautiful career in the music industry. Some tunes sound unique, while others are reminiscent of groups like Matchbox 20 and other male rock bands.

Of course, jilted love is one of the themes included in this album, but don't be fooled by the familiar sound. This band offers a fresh outlook and interesting twist to the already popular rock bands.

Unlike the others, it appears as if the band members can play instruments and can strum more than three cords. They seemed to have struggled while composing their masterpieces, which introduce a



Trinket (CD cover photo)

sound that can remind the reader of a group of friends practicing in each other's garages.

A traditional rock sound with a dash of new millennium mixes, the combination creates an unforgettable result which should satisfy anyone's need to hear real drums, a real bass beat and less original, but still effective, guitar



riffs.

The lyrics, although somewhat shallow, are simple and typical for this type of band. But as a whole, the CD, the music cords, the lyrics and members create a lively combination. The band's album might be overlooked by the vast commercialized music industry which is obsessed with the Backstreet Boys, Ricky Martin and Carlos Santana. But for the lover of real music and genuine sounds, Trinket — set to tour Canada soon — can offer the listener something no other band on the market can. It gives the listener a taste and reminder of what music used to sound like.

Sulk CD explores jilted love

By Julie Porter

If the lyrics in SULK's debut album, Only You, were any more melodramatic, the listener would have to make sure to listen to it with a barfbag on hand. But that's just what the musicians, Scottish-born Sherrie Laird and Ontario native Blair O'Halloran, intended.

Coined as "deeply-rooted in old fashioned love-themes," most of the tracks surround the genre of endless jilted love. But they aren't too difficult to stomach, mostly because the instrumental accompaniment is interesting and deviates a wee bit from the normal poppy beat one would expect with such predictable lyrics.

The title track, Only You, has moments of glory, but is definitely not the most memorable on the album. Laird's vocal range is far more expansive and powerful on the track, All You Gotta Do, and one can almost forgive the generic pop beat and cheesy lyrics.

Produced by Hi-Bias Labelhead, the album is intended to be a mix of pop-rock and R&B, but it is difficult to discern

where this R&B sound is intended.

It is unfortunate, considering Laird's Scottish roots, that we don't hear anything too different from the normal numbing beats and lyrics that are played on the radio every day of the week. All of the songs are originals — and according to the groups' biography, the range of emotions heard in the

songs were

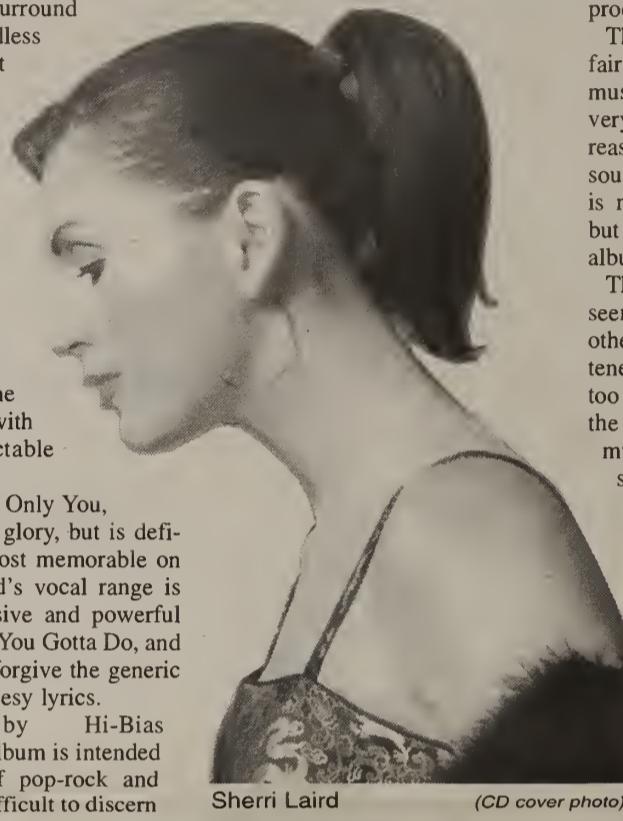


also those of the Laird and O'Halloran during the recording process.

This album is listenable, as it is fairly individual to the Canadian music scene. It has a sound that is very much American, and for this reason might get airplay. It is a sound that is easily listened to — it is not demanding on the listener, but it is this easiness that makes the album boring.

The lyrics are inspired, it would seem, by Dawson's Creek or some other earnest teen drama. Older listeners might feel that the lyrics drip too much with the tired clichés of the romantic, and because the music itself is not particularly scintillating or fabulous, the album does not hold up.

One of Only You's strengths is that the listener doesn't have to guess much at what the musicians are intending, and there is nothing pretentious or truly terrible about this album; it is simply redundant, and sounds far too much like millions of others.



Sherri Laird (CD cover photo)

ISO 9001

Conestoga
College

Setting new standards.

Conestoga College continually seeks opportunities for improvement to meet and exceed the needs of our students, employees and communities.

X-Men: summer blockbuster for all ages

By Jes Brown

If you have never heard of the X-Men before, never read one of their comic books or seen the cartoon, then you will love the movie X-Men.

If you have read the X-Men comics since you were a kid, and watched the cartoon religiously, then you will love the movie X-Men.

The movie has everything you could ever want in a summer blockbuster. There's comedy, drama, mystery, suspense and action. It's heartwrenching, funny and exciting; there are special effects, tight leather outfits, fast motorcycles, big explosions and a nearly naked woman. OK, she's blue and scaly, but hey, she's still nearly naked.

Fans of the X-Men have been waiting for this movie for a long time, and they will not be disappointed with what they have been given.

Parody of recent films has everyone in stitches

By Tracy Ford

The Wayans brothers are back and have hit Hollywood with full force. Keenan Ivory Wayans, director of this year's teen summer blockbuster, Scary Movie, has taken aspects of scary movies produced in the past years and combined them to create a wonderful museum of corny movie concepts. Brothers Shawn and Marlon Wayans co-wrote the movie, letting brother Keenan direct it.

The beginning is exactly like Scream, with big-breasted Drew Barrymore's character, Stacey, being stalked while home alone and talking on the phone to someone who dialed a wrong number.

The movie also mimics such classics as The Blair Witch Project, mocking the scene where a female documentary maker, played by Heather Donahue in the original, holds the video camera close to her face and cries, telling whoever would be watching how scared she is.

The plot (normally teen movies like this have none) begins to unfold when a group of teens accidentally kill a man and dispose of his body. A year later, the group



The concept of the story is that humans have begun evolving again. Some humans, considered mutants by the normal population, have special gifts, like being able to heal rapidly, being able to walk through walls, controlling other people's thoughts and actions and moving things with their minds.

The normal humans are afraid of these mutants and want them registered so they can keep track of them.

One faction of mutants, called the brotherhood and run by Magneto, played by Sir Ian McKellan, wants to control the humans.

The only people who can stop

Magneto's brotherhood are the X-Men run by Prof. Charles Xavier, played by Patrick Stewart.

That's the basic rundown, but it comes alive on the big screen with amazing special effects, talented writing and dynamic acting.

Wolverine, played by Australian Hugh Jackman, steals the show without a doubt.

Jackman has the character's quirks down pat — his sensitivity concerning his mysterious past, his infatuation with Dr. Jean Grey, played by Famke Janson, and his hatred of Cyclops, played by James Marsden.

Anna Paquin's Rouge is excellently portrayed, although she isn't true to the original comic.

Some things had to be condensed to fit this excellent story into one hour and 46 minutes. That meant combining the comic characters of Rouge and Jubilee:

Rouge, in the comic, is a woman in her 30s who had come into her powers long ago. In the comic, Jubilee is a teenager who has just arrived at Prof. Xavier's school for gifted children.

In the movie, their characters are

combined and Rouge is a teenager who has just come into her powers.

The interplay between Magneto (McKellan) and Prof. Xavier (Stewart) is wonderful and the tension in the love

triangle of Wolverine (Jackman), Jean Grey (Janson) and Cyclops (Marsden) is played perfectly.

All in all, this movie is worth seeing whether you are a fan or not.



Hugh Jackman, playing Wolverine, steals audience's attention during X-Men movie.

(Internet photo)

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Scary Movie is a wonderful mix of recent horror flicks.

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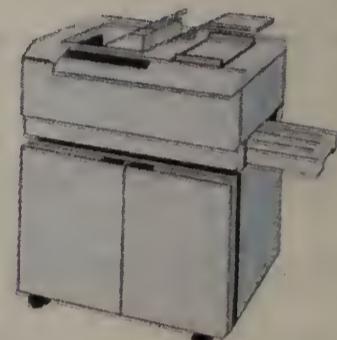
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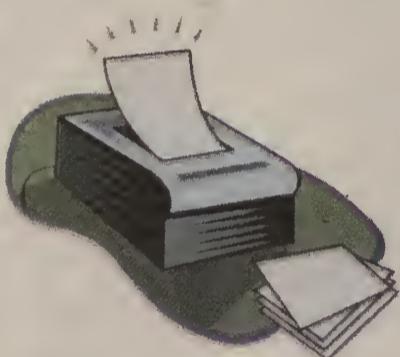
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